



Senator John Hoffman, Chair, Human Services Committee
Minnesota State Senate
March 24, 2025

Dear Chair Hoffman and Committee Members

Re: SF2647 Support

On behalf of Alluma, Inc., a Certified Community Behavioral Health Clinic, I am writing in support of Senate File 2647. As a provider of behavioral health and substance use disorder services for over 60 years in rural and frontier communities in northwest Minnesota, we understand the challenges that persistent workforce shortages create in addressing the needs of individuals in our region.

SF 2647 helps expand access to substance use disorder treatment and increase efficiencies for our limited number of licensed clinical staff by allowing them to work at the top of their licenses and integrate across mental health and substance use disorder care.

An increasing number of mental health and SUD clinics and agencies provide co-occurring and integrated services. They employ licensed mental health professionals and LADCs, among a full staff spectrum across their service lines. In this workforce and service access shortage dilemma, these agencies across Minnesota need to expand access to treatment to clients we serve and be able to best use our clinicians' time. However, in a Medical Assistance licensed SUD program under MN Statutes Sec. 245G, only licensed alcohol and drug counselors (LADCs) are authorized to provide treatment.

The field of substance use disorder is going through changes with integrated services models and the onset of ASAM criteria at a time when we see the need for substance use disorder treatment increase exponentially as an ongoing ramification of the pandemic. Individuals need more treatment and are presenting with more acute illnesses. These factors come together to add challenges to an already challenged system that creates an acute access crisis for substance use disorder treatment and care. Our region consistently scores as a 16 or higher on HRSA's workforce shortage scale for primary, behavioral and dental care and as this becomes more commonplace in Minnesota, it severely adds to a lack of providers in the State's current model. This combination of increasing workforce shortages and sustainable reimbursements results in agencies and programs shrinking or shuttering their services while those remaining struggle to keep up with long waiting lists and backed up appointments.

SF 2647 works to address/alleviate some of these challenges by expanding capacity within licensed 245G programs in Medical Assistance:

- Also allowing licensed mental health professionals, clinical trainees and licensed registered nurses – who have the individual licensed clinical scope - to provide comprehensive assessments – a critical step in starting treatment and a known backlog point of access
- Expanding qualifications to be a treatment coordinator
- Conducting a study on removing the limits on licensed health professionals' ability to provide substance use disorder treatment services when they have the individual clinical scope.

We thank you for your work, alongside other legislative members in supporting Minnesota's mental health and substance use disorder system of care. *We encourage your support of SF 2647 as part of a comprehensive and integrative approach* to the wellbeing of individuals, families and communities, ensuring timely access to treatment services for Minnesotans before more intensive services are needed, resulting in the optimization of finite resources and being good stewards of publicly funded services.

Sincerely

Shauna Reitmeier, Chief Executive Officer